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these things be expected from a people in a state of barbarism and slavery? No country in the world was capable of producing cotton in any considerable amount, of a quality fit for our manufacturers, except the Southern States of North America; and, of all countries in the world, Africa was the last that he should expect would ever produce cotton for such a purpose. Then there remained gold-dust, of which but a trifling quantity was produced, merely the washings from the sand. For all these reasons he thought it would be impolitic to form a settlement, as proposed by Dr. Baikie.

Mr. GALTON said that, although the individual items might not be large, there was a considerable amount of trade of one kind or another on the West African coast. Various thriving *entrepôts*, of which Lagos was commercially the most important, were dotted along the seaboard the whole way from the Gabún to the Senegal. The proposal was that an additional settlement should be established by this country upon the Niger, where the opportunities of trade appeared to be greater than were now enjoyed anywhere along the coast. Confessedly, the West African trade was not of first-class magnitude; but it was not a settlement of first-class importance that Dr. Baikie recommended, merely a small trading establishment. Such an establishment, bringing with it, as it would, all the advantages of European and Christian influence, was a project that he considered might be reasonably entertained on more grounds than one.

The PRESIDENT said, even allowing that all Mr. Crawford's objections were valid, we were still deeply indebted to Dr. Baikie for making us acquainted with the physical geography of this remote region.

2. Notes on Madagascar. By LIEUTENANT OLIVER, R.A.

THE Queen of Madagascar having died in 1861, and being succeeded by her son Radama II., a change was made in the policy of that kingdom. Europeans, who had been previously refused admittance, were freely invited to the capital; and our Government sent in the first instance a message of congratulation, and more recently a mission, in which Lieut. Oliver took part. Their duty was to convey an autograph letter of Her Majesty to the King of Madagascar, accompanied by suitable presents. The distance from Tamatave to the capital occupied eighteen days; the Mission travelled in palanquins carried by strong and willing porters, and traversed a country that seems mainly to be uncultivated, largely wooded, and to consist of such deep and slippery clay as to make progress exceedingly difficult after rains. A ridge of 5000 feet was crossed before coming in sight of the capital. The higher Malagase functionaries have adopted a quasi-European mode of life; the troops attempted European discipline, costume and arms, and the bands played European airs. Mr. Ellis, the distinguished missionary, had a congregation of 1000 Christians in the town, and there were six other congregations of a nearly equal size. Lieut. Oliver shows reason to doubt whether the extension of the Christian profession is the result of much sincere conviction.

The PRESIDENT said Lieut. Oliver is an officer surveying in the Mauritius. He was also anxious to survey Madagascar, and to bring forward in a future communication many interesting and valuable details respecting its physical structure; and he had requested the Royal Geographical Society to aid him in this endeavour. The Council had accordingly authorised a request to be made to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, to extend Lieut. Oliver's leave of absence for a short time, in order that he might prosecute his researches. No doubt many present were well acquainted with that most charming description of Madagascar given us by that distinguished missionary, the Rev. Mr. Ellis. It must be said to the credit of the missionaries that they had instructed the natives in the rudiments of reading and writing. The Malagasi language was never written until our missionaries went there. The Rev. Mr. Ellis, after an absence of many years, on his return found to his surprise, on disembarking, the native aide-de-camp of a general writing a despatch at the dictation of his superior officer, to be sent to a distant part of the island. It was a proof of the diffusion of writing among these people since the introduction of the art by the missionaries. Mr. Crawford would tell them something about the Malagasi language; that gentleman, who had written the first dictionary of the Malay language, having discovered a considerable mixture of that language in the Malagasi. It must be a subject of great interest to naturalists, including geologists, that this great tract of land, separated by a short distance from Africa, should be so entirely different in almost all its natural productions, particularly in its plants, while many of the animals of Africa were totally unknown there. It had therefore been supposed, theoretically, that this tract of land had been, by former convulsions of nature, separated from the countries to the east, and that, though so near to Africa, it has never had any close connection with that continent.

Mr. CRAWFORD said, in the course of his studies he had had occasion to look into the question of the geography and the philology of Madagascar. The subject that he specially wanted to bring under notice was the presence in the Madagascar language of a very considerable body of Malay and Javanese words. That was a very remarkable circumstance, for how these words came there it was difficult to explain. The nearest point of the Malayan country was 3000 miles distant. He should premise by saying that the people of Madagascar are not Malays, nor do they bear any resemblance to them. They are, in fact, negroes; but negroes of a particular description. They are negroes in the same sense that Portuguese, and Laps, and Englishmen, Germans and Spaniards are Europeans, and in no other. They are slender in their form. Their facial angle is not so acute as that of the ordinary negro. Upon the whole it seemed to him that they are incomparably more advanced in civilization than the people on the opposite coast, although at a distance of no more than 240 miles. A proof of their civilization is that a single language pervades the whole island. This is never found to be the case except where there is a considerable amount of civilization. Another proof is, that as long as we have known the country it has been ruled by one authority, and tolerably well ruled for negroes. Like all other negroes, they are ignorant of letters. No negro nation has ever invented an alphabet. To return to the Malagasi language, he found nearly two hundred words of Malay origin, all of them genuine Malay words, easily discoverable, although disguised by a foreign pronunciation. The language was totally distinct, not only from Malay, but from every other language of Africa. Compound words are to be found in it, of eight, nine, and ten syllables; and in one case he discovered a word of eleven syllables, which would require twenty-three letters to express it. In this respect they are the opposite of the Chinese, who have never yet learned to put two syllables together, their whole language being monosyllabic. Of the Malay words that are to be found in Malagasi, he would first mention the

numerals. The numerals extend from an unit up to one hundred thousand, all taken from the Malay language. Now the common negroes of Africa, such as those met with by Dr. Livingstone for example, can hardly count beyond ten, and very rarely up to a hundred. But here we find these people under the instruction of the Malays, in whatever manner the Malays may have reached them, able to count up to one hundred thousand; and he might add, as a still more curious fact, that the words for "ten thousand" and for "one hundred thousand" are borrowed from the Sanscrit, through the Malay or Javanese. This shows that the migration of the Malays took place after the Sanscrit language had been introduced in considerable amount into the languages of the Malay Archipelago. Among other Malay words that are to be found in the Malagasi are the word for a year and the word for a month. The words for "rice," "rice-field," "rice-mortar," and for "cocoa-nut," "yam," and "capsicum," are pure Malay words, from which he presumed that for the rice, the cocoa-nut, and the other vegetable productions, they were indebted to the Malays. His notion of the way in which these Malay words were brought into Madagascar was this—that a fleet of Malay pirates had been tempest-driven from their own coast, and not able to make their way back; that they had been caught in the south-east monsoon, which blows south of the equator, and had made for the first land that lay in their way, which of course would be Madagascar; that in that way they arrived in sufficient numbers to protect themselves, in the first instance, against the natives, then afterwards imparted to them a certain amount of instruction, and conveyed to them a knowledge of the cultivation and use of these vegetable productions, and finally became absorbed among them by intermarriages. The Malay language had not extended beyond Madagascar, for he had looked carefully into Bishop Colenso's grammar and dictionary of the Zulu language, and he did not find a single Malay word in them.

Mr. CONSUL TAYLOR said, he wished to add his approval of what Dr. Baikio had proposed in the previous paper. He had been in the Niger and Tschadda, in command of the *Pleiad*, in 1854, and had been to and from and residing more or less in various parts of Africa since 1844. He believed there were very many advantages to be derived from establishing a commerce on the Niger. He disagreed with Mr. Crawford's opinion that Africa was the last country to which he should look for cotton. It possessed a most suitable soil and climate, abundance of labour and of water-communication, and it was the birthplace and natural home of the cotton-plant. If it was meant that Africa could not, without an influx of capital, produce as much cotton next year as America did before the war, he quite agreed in the assertion; but he maintained that cotton could be produced in Africa if we went there to seek it. Mr. Taylor pointed out the small area on the map, near Cape Formosa, 200 miles in length, by 100 in depth, from which we obtained palm-oil of the value of a million and a half every year, and asked what might we not expect from the whole of that vast continent if the necessary facilities for trade existed?

The PRESIDENT closed the sitting with the announcement that M. Jules Gérard, the celebrated Algerian lion-killer, who was present, was about to undertake an expedition into Africa. He proposed, in the first instance, to go to the country of Dahomey, thence to Ashanti, and finally to explore and follow the so-called Kong Mountains, of which nothing definite was known, to the British colony of Sierra Leone. Should he succeed thus far, and his health permitted it, he hoped to penetrate from Sierra Leone into the interior, and examine the sources and upper portion of the Niger. It was a great undertaking to accomplish; and, as this distinguished Frenchman was partially assisted by our Government, he hoped he would be able to bring back some useful and important knowledge.

Finally, the PRESIDENT announced that, in consequence of numerous com-

plaints received from Fellows of the Society who cannot obtain seats at the Evening Meeting, the Council call attention to the Rule (Chap. v. Sect. 3, Par. 2):—

“Visitors, if introduced by Fellows, may be present at the Ordinary Meetings; but the privilege of introducing Visitors shall be limited to *one* only, and should a Fellow desire to introduce a second, he is requested to apply to the Acting Secretary for a special card of admission;” and the Council have further resolved,—

“That no Visitor, excepting those *personally* introduced by Fellows, be admitted to the Room before 8.15 P.M.”

The Meeting was then adjourned to Monday, February 23rd.

Seventh Meeting, Monday, February 23rd, 1863.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*Commander Charles J. Bullock, R.N.; the Chevalier Duprat; Alfred Barry; Antonio Gabrielli; W. E. Heathfield; S. H. Hinde; George Macfarlan; and John Thomas, Esqrs., were presented upon their election.*

ELECTIONS.—*Major Francis J. Rickard; Arthur Anderson; James P. Brown; A. Bertie Cator; John L. Ellerton; Robert Gillies, C.E.; Rowland Hamilton; Loton Holland; James H. Kerr, R.N.; James E. McConnell, C.E.; Frederick Pearson; John Ritchie; George M. Robinson; William A. Ross; H. Duncan Skrine; and James Thomson, Esqrs., were elected Fellows.*

ACCESSIONS.—Among the donations to the Library and Map-rooms since the former meeting were—Hughes’ ‘Geography of British History;’ Adams’ ‘Geography Classified;’ Wills’ ‘Successful Exploration through Australia;’ continuation of Philip’s Imperial Library Atlas; Clark’s Map of the Holy Land; Admiralty Charts, Ordnance Maps, &c. &c.

EXHIBITIONS.—Several diagrams illustrative of the Formation of Icebergs in Greenland; Clark’s Map of the Holy Land; Railway and Geological Maps of the United Kingdom, by S. Clarke, &c. &c., were exhibited.

The Papers read were—

1. *Rupert Land, the Colony and its Limits.* By CAPTAIN MILLINGTON H. SYNGE, R.E., F.R.G.S.

THIS paper opened with an allusion to those read before the Society by the same author (*vide* vol. xxii. ‘Journal’), which treated of the physical geography of the interior of British North America, as